

**Opening Remarks of Governor Steve Bullock
at the Montana Historic Preservation Awards Ceremony
on January 18, 2013
at the Myrna Loy Center, Helena at 1:30 p.m.**

Thank you. I am happy to be able to join you this afternoon. And I'm especially pleased to have the opportunity to commend the individuals who have devoted their time and energy to caring for Montana's historic properties, our archaeological sites and traditional cultural places.

Over the past two years, we have brought nearly 40 Montana properties into the special fold of the National Register of Historic Places. These resources are incredibly diverse. They include bridges, cemeteries, ranches, homesteads, hotels, schools, a depot, an insurance building, a government building, a church, a medical clinic, a vacation property, city and university districts, and even that most iconic Montana landmark, a historic bar. And Montana's newest National Historic Landmark – the Deer Medicine Rocks National Historic Landmark in Rosebud County – is also now on the Register. These properties span the period from Montana's frontier days to the Modernist architectural styles we see in the Helena branch office building of the Western Life Insurance Company, and the Walt Sullivan Building on the Capitol complex.

As Montanans, we pride ourselves on our individuality and independence. These ideals were born of people from all walks of life: Native Americans, trappers, miners, loggers, farmers and ranchers, railroaders and homesteaders. Mettle and an unshakeable belief in the possibility of creating a better life motivated many to move to the Montana frontier—no easy undertaking. Their courage led to the growth of cities and towns all across the state. Some prospered and have stood the test the time; other once-thriving settlements are now little more than hollowed-out buildings surrounded by the tombstones of our ancestors. But their spirit of optimism and their willingness to work hard have been passed on to us.

It's more than just a cliché that, to know where we are going, we must know where we have been. History is relevant. And progress provides us with opportunities to renew and reinvent. We can make the old serve modern needs. Age and usefulness are not mutually exclusive. Just look around at the building we are in – what better example than the Myrna Loy, an old jail that is now at the heart of the arts in Helena.

And, I recognize that preserving where we have been isn't always easy. Until 5 days ago, my family lived in the Herrmann & Co Building, a pre-statehood building a block away from here, so I recognize some of the challenges you face in preserving our past. I'll never forget my experience when I was considering purchasing the building – there were structural issues, as it

had survived a couple of earthquakes. When it rained outside, it rained inside, because the century of tar layers wasn't quite water tight. Yes, the building had its share of challenges. But what was stunning was that -- though this is a building that had stood longer than we had been a state -- the first two contractors I had tour the building suggested that, with the proximity to downtown, I'd be better off tearing it down and starting over. We all lose a little of what we might become when we lose what and where we have been.

The people we recognize tonight have put into practice the reflective thinking and thoughtful action that characterize historic preservation. Preservation is hard work. It requires dedication and can sometimes take a lifetime. It often involves engaging those with different beliefs, helping them to understand the value of preservation. And it often requires extra financial resources, not because of any future earning potential, but based on the love of history and preservation. Because of your efforts, my children and future generations will have the opportunity to witness and appreciate our state's historical treasures.

To those of you who listed your property in the National Register of Historic Places, who persuaded others that site preservation is valuable, and who invested your hearts as well as your time and money, on behalf of all Montanans, my sincere thanks and my congratulations.

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